

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05 H-02 INR-10
L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-02 SP-02 SS-15 USIA-15
ACDA-12 IO-14 EB-08 NRC-07 OES-07 SOE-02 DOE-11
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R 151317Z MAR 78
FM AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 228
INFO AMCONSUL BOMBAY
AMCONSUL CALCUTTA
AMCONSUL MADRAS

UNCLAS NEW DELHI 4128

E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: TECH, IN, US
SUBJECT: INDO-US NUCLEAR RELATIONS

REF: 77 NEW DELHI 18703

1. INDO-US NUCLEAR RELATIONS WERE ON THE FRONT PAGES OF THE INDIAN PRESS AGAIN MARCH 15, FOLLOWING A WELL REPORTED MEETING THE PREVIOUS DAY OF THE INDIAN PARLIAMENTARY CONSULTATIVE COMMITTEE FOR THE DEPARTMENTS OF ATOMIC ENERGY, SPACE, ELECTRONICS AND SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY. THE MEETING WAS CHAIRED BY THE PRIME MINISTER IN HIS ROLE AS MINISTER IN CHARGE OF THESE DEPARTMENTS.

2. ACCORDING TO PRESS ACCOUNTS, MEMBERS WERE SERIOUSLY CONCERNED OVER THE POSSIBLITY OF THE US REFUSING TO HONOR ITS CONTRACTUAL OBLIGATIONS TO SUPPLY ENRICHED URANIUM TO TARAPUR. THEY ENQUIRED WHETHER THE GOVERNMENT HAD GIVEN ATTENTION TO THE NEED FOR PRODUCING ALTERNATIVE FUEL FROM INDIGENOUS RESOURCES IN THE EVENT OF THE US STOPPING SUPPLIES.

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ONE, JANATA MP KRISHAN KANT, WHO WILL BE REMEMBERED FOR HIS OPEN LETTER TO PRESIDENT CARTER OF JANUARY 1, REPORTEDLY URGED THAT INDIA BEGIN NOW TO ARRANGE FOR REPROCESSING SPENT TARAPUR FUEL.

3. THE MP'S WERE ALSO SAID TO HAVE ASKED IF INDIA WOULD HAVE THE TITLE TO THE SPENT FUEL IF THE US "REPUDIATED" ITS

AGREEMENT.

4. THE PRIME MINISTER REPORTEDLY TOLD THE MP'S THAT THE TARAPUR ISSUE REQUIRED CARE AND PATIENCE, AND EXPRESSED THE HOPE WITHOUT ANTICIPATING RESULTS THAT THE QUESTION WOULD BE SORTED OUT DURING HIS VISIT TO WASHINGTON. HE IS SAID TO HAVE TOLD THE COMMITTEE THAT SHOULD THE US "REPUDIATE" THE AGREEMENT FOR SUPPLY OF ENRICHED URANIUM, INDIA WOULD RETAIN TITLE TO THE SPENT FUEL. SEVERAL PRESS ACCOUNTS INFERRED FROM THIS THAT INDIA WOULD THEN BE FREE TO REPROCESS THIS SPENT FUEL.

5. IT WAS FURTHER EXPLAINED TO THE MP'S THAT
-- INDIA COULD NOT ECONOMICALLY ENRICH URANIUM FOR TARAPUR;
-- AN ALTERNATIVE FUEL USING INDIGENOUS RESOURCES AND PLUTONIUM FROM REPROCESSED FUEL WAS THEORETICALLY FEASIBLE; AND
-- THAT THE PRESENT INDO-US AGREEMENT ON TARAPUR GIVES THE US THE EXCLUSIVE RIGHT TO SUPPLY FUEL FOR TARAPUR IN ADDITION TO A VETO OVER THE DISPOSITION OF THE SPENT FUEL.
GOHEEN

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Message Attributes

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